

David Wood Mansion
(WaWa Farm Markets Office)
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
821 Columbia Avenue
Millville
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1197

HABS
NJ
6-MILLV,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HABBS
NJ
6-MILLV,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DAVID WOOD MANSION (WAWA FARM MARKETS OFFICE)

HABBS No. NJ-1197

Location: 821 Columbia Ave., Millville, Cumberland County.

Significance: This early nineteenth-century stone residence was erected by David Wood, one of the founders of R. D. Wood and Company. It sits opposite a vacant manufacturing site, amid a neighborhood of workers housing and company structures related to another Wood family enterprise, the Millville Manufacturing Company.

Description: Built in 1804. The main block of this L-plan, vernacular, front-facing dwelling is five bays long, two bays deep, and two-and-one-half stories tall. It is built of New Jersey sandstone covered with stucco. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There are two interior gable-end chimneys; one appears to be an original brick and stucco, the other a later brick replacement. Three steeply pitched roof dormers on the front slope are later additions, probably in the 1850-70s, as indicated by the deep eaves, Italianate brackets, and round-topped windows. The fenestration is six-over-six-light, double-hung wood sash set in wood frames; the shutters are three-panel wood. The single front door is wood with a transom window above. There is a raised one-story front porch with a flat roof that extends over most of the facade; the supports are cast iron. The spaces at the rear of the structure and on the interior were inaccessible.

History: During the colonial period, settlers in South Jersey utilized the resources of the area not only to create a self-sufficient economy for themselves, but also to facilitate the break away from the British government. With the products made from iron foundries, mills, and glass factories, the colonists no longer relied upon agriculture as a single source of income. The early industries in South Jersey include: glassmaking, ironworks, gristmills, sawmills, cedar mining, charcoal burning, and brickmaking. Many of these enterprises were sustained well into the nineteenth century, though others did not survive the industrial revolution.

Prior to the founding of Millville, Henry Drinker and Joseph Smith purchased 24,000 acres of woodland here, built a dam, and formed the Union Company. Its main product was lumber cut at the water-powered sawmill, which was then floated downriver. In 1795 Joseph Buck, a Cumberland County resident and Revolutionary War veteran, bought a portion of the Union Company land and planned Millville. The town was laid out to facilitate the erection of mills on every possible tract along the river, with manor houses situated on higher ground to the east. His plans show streets extending from Smith to Broad streets, and from Buck to Fourth streets along the river. As Buck planned, Millville's first residents established themselves on the east side of the river, though as more people settled there, houses were built on the opposite shore, too. Millville was incorporated in 1866.

Bog, or meadow ore, was found throughout New Jersey, especially in the south. This natural resource was the foundation of many early furnaces and foundries--whose products included verandas, fencing, and other architectural ornamentation--including those of the Wood family.¹ The R. D. Wood and Company foundry, established in 1814 as Smith and Wood, produced iron plates among other things. In 1840 Richard Wood bought the company and erected two new furnaces that were capable of smelting 40 tons of iron a day. As R. D. Wood and Company, the foundry discontinued the practice of

¹ Charles S. Boyer, Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931).

manufacturing iron itself, in favor of the specific task of casting gas and water pipes. These foundries, along with Millville Manufacturing (see HABS No. NJ-1198)--also owned by Wood--were powered by Union Lake Dam. By the end of the nineteenth century, R.D. Wood employed 125 persons and earned approximately \$350,000 annually.²

Dwellings on the east side of Millville exemplify Buck's ideal of an integrated residential-company complex and reflect a variety of nineteenth-century architectural styles. Many Millville Manufacturing employees lived in homes constructed by the Wood family in the surrounding area. The company also constructed a wood bridge across the Maurice River to shorten the distance for those workers who lived on the western shore. And they shopped at the company store on Columbia Avenue.

Today the mansion is flanked by blocks of houses that were rented to Wood company employees. These are either plain, two-story double A-fronts with four bays across, or boxier three-story, three-pile, six-bay dormitory-like buildings with two ridge chimneys. Entrances are in the third bay of the side facade, or centered in the gable end. Few of the latter, especially, are decorated; on the ones that do contain ornamentation, it is usually limited to spindlework on the porch. Present occupants have restored the buildings' exterior with aluminum or faux-brick asphalt siding--perhaps to help establish their identity in the neighborhood. The company store is also extant, as are some Millville Manufacturing foundry-related buildings, including the pump house used by the cotton mill.³

Sources:

Boyer, Charles S. Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931.

Cushing, Thomas, and Charles E. Sheppard. History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland in New Jersey. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883.

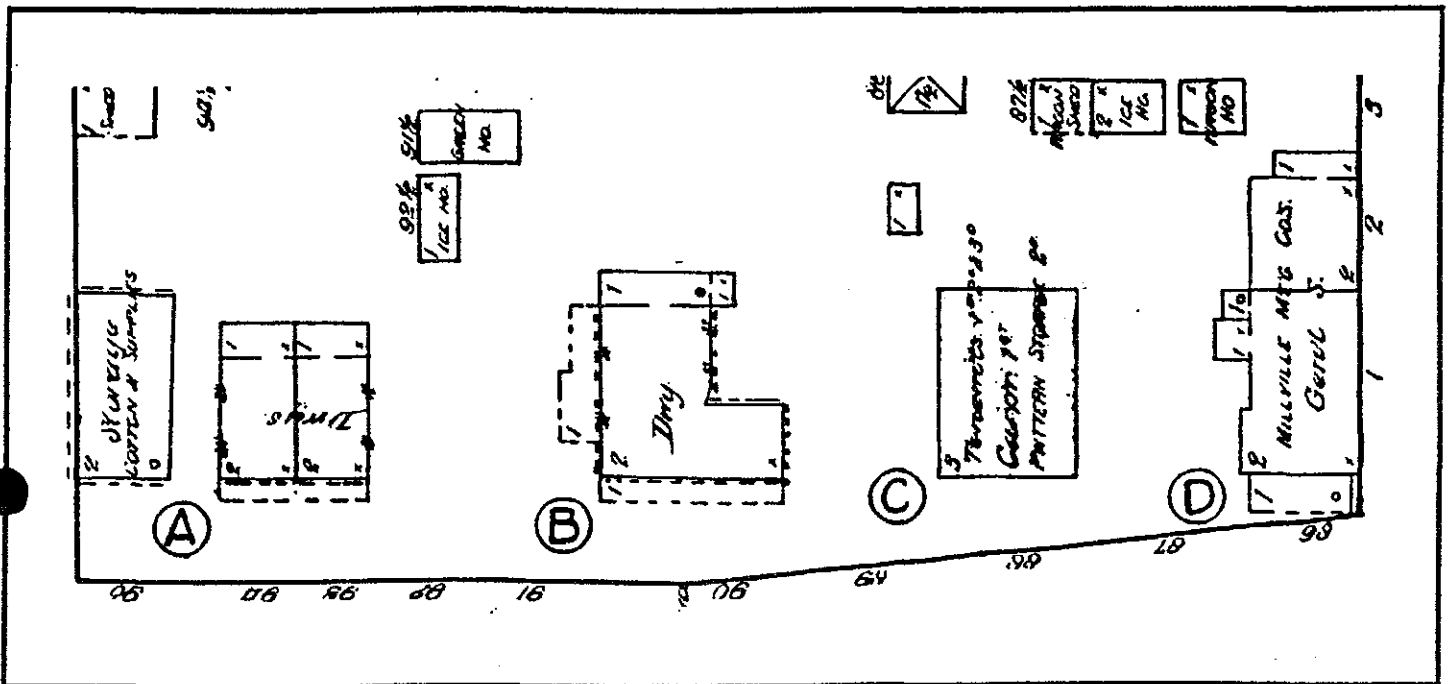
"Millville, New Jersey," Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1886.

Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.

² Thomas Cushing and Charles E. Sheppard. History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland in New Jersey (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883), 643.

³ Jean Jones, "Millville Manufacturing Company: A Foundation For Industry," Millville News (25 February 1991), 18.



Millville Manufacturing Company buildings along Columbia Avenue include:
A) a two-family dwelling, B) the Wood Mansion, C) tenement housing, and
D) the general store.

Millville, New Jersey. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886.